

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: TSPA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED DEMONSTRATION USING ITALY'S SIRIO
SATELLITE

1. NASA HEADQUARTERS HAS RECEIVED REPORT FROM ROBERT GOSS
OF NASA DELTA LAUNCH VEHICLE PROJECT OFFICE OF AMBASSADOR'S
REQUEST FOR BRIEFING ON NASA'S DELTA PROGRAM AND HIS
INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING AN EXCHANGE OF
GREETINGS BETWEEN GOI AND USG SENIOR OFFICIALS USING
ITALY'S SIRIO EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE AFTER
ITS LAUNCH BY NASA CURRENTLY PLANNED FOR AUGUST 18.

2. NASA RESPONSE IS CONTAINED IN FOLLOWING LETTER FROM
ARNOLD W. FRUTKIN, NASA ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR INTER-
NATIONAL AFFAIRS: QUOTE

HONORABLE RICHARD N. GARDNER
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AMBASSADOR
UNITED STATES EMBASSY
ROME, ITALY

DEAR DICK:

ROBERT GOSS OF THE NASA DELTA LAUNCH VEHICLE PROJECT

OFFICE REPORTED TO ME HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU IN ROME SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, AND WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOUR INTEREST IN OUR ACTIVITIES WITH ITALIAN SPACE INTERESTS.

ON YOUR REQUEST FOR A POSSIBLE BRIEFING ON THE DELTA PROGRAM, PETER EATON, DELTA PROGRAM MANAGER, AND WILLIAM BASTEDO OF THIS OFFICE WILL BE IN ROME JUNE 16-17 FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE (CNR) ON REIMBURSABLE LAUNCHING MATTERS, AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM TO YOU THEN, IF YOU FELT THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL.

SIRIO IS A CNR SPACECRAFT WHICH WE ARE LAUNCHING ON A COST-REIMBURSABLE BASIS. WE DISTINGUISH THIS FROM A QUOTE COOPERATIVE UNQUOTE, NON-REIMBURSABLE PROGRAM. SIRIO WAS IN FACT PROPOSED TO US AS A COOPERATIVE PROJECT FOR COST-FREE LAUNCHING, IN OTHER WORDS. HOWEVER, OUR PROGRAM PEOPLE DETERMINED AT THE TIME THAT NOTHING WOULD BE CONTRIBUTED TO NASA'S OWN SPACE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM WHICH COULD WARRANT OUR PAYING THE COST OF THE LAUNCHING. THEREFORE, THE LAUNCHING ARRANGEMENTS WITH CNR FOR SIRIO ARE ON A COST-REIMBURSABLE BASIS, AND THERE IS NO NASA INVOLVEMENT IN THE SIRIO SATELLITE ITSELF OR IN THE PLANNED SIRIO EXPERIMENTS PROGRAM AFTER LAUNCH. FOR THIS REASON, A BRIEFING ON THE SIRIO SATELLITE AND PROGRAM SHOULD BE PROVIDED BY ITALIAN SOURCES WHICH WOULD, I ASSUME, READILY OBLIGE.

I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF USING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIRIO, ONCE LAUNCHED, FOR AN EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS OR DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. SINCE THERE IS NO NASA TECHNICAL INVOLVEMENT IN SIRIO, AND THE SATELLITE'S CAPABILITIES ARE OF NO CURRENT TECHNICAL INTEREST, SUCH A DEMONSTRATION WOULD APPEAR TO BE PROPERLY OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND A MATTER FOR STATE RATHER THAN NASA CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE HAPPY TO ASSIST TECHNICALLY IF CALLED UPON TO DO SO.

AFTER LAUNCH, THE SIRIO SPACECRAFT WILL REMAIN UNDER LIMITED NASA CONTROL FOR ABOUT 45 DAYS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GEOSTATIONARY POSITIONING. BASED ON AVAILABLE ITALIAN INFORMATION, IT APPEARS THAT THE SIRIO ANTENNA PATTERN IN THE WIDE BAND MODE MAY BE CAPABLE OF TRANSMITTING A VIDEO SIGNAL BETWEEN ROME AND THE EASTERN UNITED STATES. WE ARE UNSURE ABOUT HOW MUCH POWER THE SPACECRAFT WILL PUT OUT IN THAT MODE AND BELIEVE THE QUALITY OF THE

SIGNAL WOULD HAVE TO BE CHECKED WITH CNR, ALONG WITH A

CAREFUL STUDY OF ANY COSTS INVOLVED.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER A VISIT BY MESSRS.
EATON AND BASTEDO JUNE 16 OR 17 WOULD BE USEFUL TO YOU.
WE WOULD BE PLEASE TO WORK WITH THE EMBASSY IN TAKING A
CLOSER LOOK AT THE FEASIBILITY OF A DEMONSTRATION AND
THE COSTS INVOLVED, IF THDEPARTMENT WISHES TO CARRY
OUT SUCH A PROJECT.

SINCERELY,

ARNOLD W. FRUTKIN UNQUOTE

3. ORIGINAL OF LETTER BEING POUCHED. IN VIEW NASA REPS
PLANNED VISIT TO ROME JUNE 16-17, DEPARTMENT WOULD
APPRECIATE POST RESPONSE TO NASA OFFER OF BRIEFING. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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